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FROM THE...  
OLITUDES

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To Mrs. R. H. Norton  
Edinburgh

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from Mary Morgan  
(Gowan Lee)  
Nov. 3<sup>d</sup> / 26



ECHOES FROM THE  
SOLITUDES





# ECHOES FROM THE SOLITUDES

BY

MARY MORGAN  
(GOWAN LEA)

LONDON

GEORGE ALLEN, 156, CHARING CROSS ROAD

1901

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ONE thing only I know and declare :  
'Tis that *Justice* must sway,  
Ere the heart of the world be at peace  
With itself or the day.

Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & CO.  
At the Ballantyne Press



## TO MY MOTHER

*Aye when the world seems heartless, drear, and  
cold,*

*When from its mockery my soul would hide,  
And melancholy only doth abide*

*To wrap me in its heavy ebon fold;*

*I can retire, disquietude untold,*

*My troubles, childlike, unto her confide,*

*With her in waking dream sit side by side,*

*And shed my bitter tears as once of old.*

*Her memory's a sanctuary now,*

*Though long, long years have veiled her from  
my sight;*

*Almost I feel her hand upon my brow,*

*And then the darkness is transformed to light;*

*But when I cry, "My mother, it is thou!"*

*The vision's gone: I sit alone with night.*



## PREFACE

*" . . . There is a diary of the affections which we might keep for years without having occasion even to touch upon the exterior surface of life, our busy occupations—the mechanical portion of our existence: yet by the last we are judged, the first is never known."*—BULWER.

*"In the immense sum of human existence, what is a single unit? . . . What a world of hope may be buried in a single grave!"*—BULWER.

*"To aspire is to be alone."*—BULWER.



## Echoes from the Solitudes

FIRST of all, belong to yourself.

Look things straight in the face : separate them from all you have been taught, whether by church, school, or parents. Look at them from the standpoint of your own reason, in the light of your own day. This is your birthright : use it.

It is better that we pass away with our time. How could we ever explain ourselves to those who have not known us in our surroundings—our parents and our daily lives, our educational atmosphere ! And I might add our prejudices, which prevent our march with time.

When I ponder on all that has been accomplished by the Shakespeares and the

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Goethes of all climes and of all ages, I am forced to believe that these spiritual giants are in some real sense immortal. The evolution of the higher senses will bring about a revolution in our faiths, and the crude superstitions of the materialist will be succeeded by the speculations of the scientific spiritualist. It is curious to observe how all the "impossibilities" in the domain of matter are with each succeeding day transformed into "possibilities." And each day stretches out its hands laden with new tools for the use of to-morrow. What discovery will to-morrow proclaim?

At Stratford-on-Avon I was impressed by the flatness of the place. On expressing my disappointment to a Scotch labourer in the neighbourhood, the man replied, "Nae doubt, ma leddy, the Lord Almighty put Shakespeare's talent into him at his birth; for there's naething here, I warrant ye, but dulness."

"Friends are a costly luxury," says one.



Granted. But what would life be without friends! Emerson said, "I guard well my friendships: they are more to me than any conceivable fame."

Often I have sighed for two lives: one to experiment with, the other to fall back upon when experiments failed.

There is an inside and an outside to everything. A healthy body must have a healthy inside and a healthy outside. We are influenced by our surroundings.

O. for a breeze in the churches — a spiritual breeze I mean—that would carry away at one fell swoop the cobwebs of unreason, thus permitting preacher and congregation to interest themselves in the facts that pertain to their own lives, rather than in the fictions of the past. Thought is a flowing stream. I think it was the poet Rogers who was asked by a lady what was his religion. He replied that his religion was that of all sensible men. "And

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what religion is that?" said the lady. "That, no sensible man ever tells," was the rejoinder.

The poet, the painter, the musician are branches from one root. They are searchers for the ideal, each in his own path.

*Sunday Night.*—Have just heard that Dr. James Martineau is dead! A great soul! What of it now?

Rest on your own thought. Let nothing, no loss, nor the thought even of death, depress you. Seeing that death is inevitable, why should we be so constituted that the thought of it is repugnant?

What superficial lives people are living, and only the realities are worth living for! Ah, it is so much to meet a thinker, especially one who has the courage of his opinions.

Seeing that the world was made so good, one cannot but wonder that it was not made better.

What is genius? It is the glance of youth and age combined; it is the masculine and feminine glance combined; it is the spontaneous glance of Nature herself.

*Scotland, August 1901.*—Let the sunshine and the waves sparkle and the birds sing and the brooks ripple, and let us have the inspiration of wit and the wholesomeness of laughter; and let us have all these things on the seventh day as well as on the other six, so that the seventh day become not to humanity a period of insupportable solemnity and of utter stagnation. To worship the Bible or the Church or the Sunday as our forefathers did, would require us to renounce our reason to-day—would require us to turn back the hands on the dial of time.

The world moves, and he who would advance with it must be continually exchanging old ideas for new ones. To the severely dogmatic, conservative temperament, to whom custom is a god, I cannot explain.

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A thought passing through the brain is the greatest of miracles.

Write your name upon your portrait; otherwise, in five or ten or twenty years people may doubt if the picture be of you or of some one else.

What a rush and clamour and struggle and competition in the world of affairs! And all that is greatest and most beautiful springs out of the mysterious silences, like the snowdrop in spring.

If millionaires could buy a million of health, or of youth, or of genuine affection, one could understand their readiness to sacrifice *all* for money.

It matters to the world now and always if our lives are spent well or ill: surely also in some way it matters to us personally, ultimately.

I am a part of the moment in which I live, a part of its sun and moon and stars

and earth and sea. I am set in them and we are moved on together. Each life is a cameo cut in the rock of ages.

My hope for humanity is that I regard it as a plant seeking the light.

To converse helps thinking. The ball needs to be thrown back.

With the advance of scientific knowledge I suppose that a life may be prolonged far beyond anything we have yet seen. With a knowledge of the elements which go to make what we call life, if one element decays we may learn to supply it. In other words, why may not science enable us to surmount death?

What matters it if we speak of the God-head as one or three or twenty? But it matters that we try to be honest in our speech and in our dealings one with another.

It is a good general rule never to quarrel with anybody.

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How strange it seems that the material things remain, while the personalities pass away! Here the watch is ticking while the loved hand that wound it is cold—dead!

As I look at my hand and see the veins I say, "There runs the blood of my father and my mother!" Both father and mother were exceptionally great and good. Surely I must live nobly!

O it is well to have one little corner to oneself, to live in or . . . to die in!

In the life of the spirit (the real life), a good new resolution means a step into a better world.

Shall I be afraid to descend into that dark tomb whence so much beauty springs? Just look into the face of that flower! [A *Polyanthus* in early spring.]

*January* 3rd.—The beautiful thoughts



that pass through my brain suggest that there must be somewhat more satisfying than all this that fills my days.

The face of the country changes with time, even as the human face alters with the varied experiences which years bring to all. The photographer tries to efface the wrinkles: the artist studies to show them, knowing that they express character.

I feel like a lone rock out on a boundless sea.

I have read that the name Morgan means "of the sea." No wonder that I am a lover of Nature. According to legend the Mary-Morgans were an uncannie lot—a cross between the natural and the supernatural—appearing as sirens, fairies, naiads! There is a well-known book by Emile Souvestre entitled *Les Derniers Bretons*. At page 119 the legend of "Une Mary-Morgan, princesse (sirène) qui habite l'étang du duc, près de Vannes," is related.

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I recall also the song in which occurs the lines :—

“O voyageur, entends ces accords  
Qui mêlent en des rafales,  
La voix magique et tendre des cors  
Et les harpes triomphales.  
Celle qui t'apperait là-bas,  
De frais glaïeuls coiffée,  
C'est Morgane la fée !” &c.

As humanity grows in power, time and space become more and more subordinate. Mind must triumph at last. It is cruel the power of time and space at present to separate friends. In my lines on Friendship reference is made to this belief.

### FRIENDSHIP

When friend to friend hath spoken the farewell,  
And trembled at the thought that ne'er again  
Perchance they two shall meet—the magic spell  
Of sacred friendship, is it rent in twain?

From shore to shore the waves of ocean roll,  
From East to West the lonely breezes blow,  
And shall not soul commune with kindred soul  
In mutual sympathetic ebb and flow?

1901.—Good morning! I have seen the turn of a century. Strange to think that I and all who have seen it shall not see the turn of another! In the words of Rahel Von Varnhagen (Heine's friend) I would say:—

“May the New Year be less cruel than its predecessor! I wish to the stupid a little reason, and to the reasonable a little poetry. To the rich I wish a heart, and to the poor a little bread. But above all I wish that we may speak as little ill of one another as possible in this New Year.”

In going through Goethe's house at Weimar and seeing the small modest room where he died, I could not help thinking how little is required by genius!

*London, 1901.*—Will you go by the underground? No, most certainly not. Underground is bad enough for the dead: let me be above-ground so long as I can choose my own way. Ballooning would suit me best; but that is not yet, though it is coming in the near future. I should be

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willing to give twenty years of my present life in exchange for twenty years of the next century.

It is noticeable how much time is devoted now to physical exercise. One gets weary hearing of golf, &c. . . . It may be pardonable to ask if the brain may not deteriorate for want of exercise. And girls are growing so big, so gigantic; they are over-topping the men!

Avoid an unbroken routine. The change even from one room to another is better than no change. Remember that "he who sees only one thing, and that always the same thing, sees nothing at all."

We are all travellers more or less courageous, more or less hopeful, crying out How, Whence, Where, and listening to our own voices as they echo back to us from the solitudes.

The *Weltschmerz* has been my malady from the first moment of my thinking being.

I am continually feeling the contrast between the *is* and the *might have been*. Music saddens while it soothes me. My voice is full of tears.

How can any one be actually thoughtfully happy whilst not knowing what has become of the dead! There can be no peace in my soul so long as I am sensible of suffering and privation.

O for the history of the soul!

A new resolution is a new day in the world of spirit.

*April 6th, 1899.*—To-morrow will be my birthday. It is still winter, cold and cheerless. Perhaps the spring will come to-morrow! I ponder the mystery of life. As long as I can remember I have been pondering that. My consciousness must have wakened on that very thought.

Some one has sent me some flowers. Flowers are a great pleasure to me. They are lovely companions. Sometimes I think

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I must get a little garden in some warm sunny clime and turn gardener for the rest of my days. My books and my flowers and my poetry, and the skies and the sea and the sun . . . and the butterflies (type of the soul)—these are my boon companions!

My father had the neatest way of hitting off a serious argument with a touch of humour. Once we were talking about the Hereafter. He said, "I am very happy in this world, and I expect to be happy in the next; if I'm not, I'll not stay!"

"O *thou* beautiful delicate little flower, rooted in heaven, and somehow blossoming on earth! I am like a lone leaf on the sea getting whirled away from all its dear ones." So said a great genius to me as he passed away to that bourne from which no traveller returns. His words seemed to leave a blessing in my soul.

If one could be in the full vigour of thought at the last moment of earthly life . . . what a passage!



How many, alas, die of a broken heart!  
Far more than the world knows.

Imagination is the most precious endowment. It is the pearl of great price. It is divine. It is of the high gods. Without it man is a machine; having it, he is a creator. The poet may well be proud. The bard of Scotia unhesitatingly subscribed himself, Robert Burns, Poet. This self-knowledge the world calls egotism.

And again the poet-genius said to me:  
"At night I run through the frozen streets  
and the cold glistening snow, and my  
heart cries out, 'O God for a home, for a  
home!'"

I sat up at midnight and watched the fire  
burn, and felt a sort of companionship in  
the blazing logs.

*Münich*, 1900.—Whence comes the fondness for candles at a death-bed or at a grave? Is it expected that the light of the candle will illuminate the path of the soul?

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O to be buried away up among the fleecy clouds, and not below under the ground. Surely there will be somebody to see that I am cremated.

Cremation is doubtless the best way of disposing of the dead. The most desirable also. To bury corpses in churches is surely the most hideous mode to the rational mind. I sympathise with those who choose cremation, or, failing that, give preference to simple burial somewhere out in the open.

“ Mes chers amis, quand je mourrai,  
Plantez un saule au cimetière.  
J'aime son feuillage éploré,  
La paleur m'en est douce et chère.  
Et son ombre sera légère  
A la terre où je dormirai ! ”

—ALFRED DE MUSSET.

“ My friends beloved, when I shall die,  
A willow plant upon my grave.  
I love to hear its branches sigh,  
And see the pallid leaflets wave.  
That its sweet shadow lightly lie  
Where I shall sleep, is all I crave.”

*Translation, MARY MORGAN.*

*Tutto ritorna*, says the Italian: and I believe that a profound truth lies therein. In "Auld Lang Syne" we find Prof. Max Müller saying—

" . . . And yet there is continuity in the world, there is no flaw, no break anywhere, and what has been will surely be again, though how it will be we cannot know. . . . As we grow old it is our fate to lose our friends; but the friends we have lost are often nearer to us than the friends who remain. Will they never be quite near to us again? Stars meet stars after thousands of years, and are we not of more value than many a star?"

Out of the diary of my "long ago" I copy this, for the mystery of which it treats remains for me the same:—

This mystery of life, what is it? Only this morning the little dog "Glucose" was so full of the gladness of life, running after the carriage to bark as usual; but the wheel passed over him, and he was crushed, and as he lay on the doorstep dying I called, Glucose! and he tried to rise and follow me, and his eyes spoke *intelligence* and

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*affection.* Who dare affirm that the spirit, or whatever we choose to call it, *has gone out—is not.* Is it not as reasonable to suppose that the affection and intelligence which dwelt in him have only changed their dwelling-place, as to believe that we ourselves are on the way to something higher? When I looked at Glucose as he lay dead, he appeared totally unlike what he had been—the difference being as great as that between the living and the dead of our own species. That wondrous life that had shone through the eyes had passed—we can't tell where—but it *had passed*, for now I looked on *vacancy*.

1901.—“The Queen is dead! God save the King!” Here we see the quick succession of events in a way that all do not realise in ordinary circumstances.

It is plain that the poet can be understood only by the poet. Of course the poet may be writer or painter or musician, &c.

Consumptives used to be kept shut up in a room. Now they are kept out in the open air. The belief of yesterday is the unbelief of to-day.

Nothing so precious as life! Yet we squander it as though everything else were more precious than it. "Give me health and a day and I will make the pomp of emperors ridiculous," said Emerson.

If, on the one hand, life be like a treadmill as regards routine, yet man can vary it constantly and unlimitedly through his capacity for thinking.

Some are always longing for society, afraid of solitude: others welcome a wet day if only because they think it will save them from interruption. Goethe said he often went to his bed in order to save himself from visitors!

The time is coming when one will consider whether he will travel between one

place and another by coach, or by train, or by electric motor, or by steamer on the sea or under the sea, or by balloon! A time is coming, too, when machinery will be made to go with less friction, and indeed when all noise that is not musical shall be eliminated.

Scientists are still talking about cells and the composition of cells. They have not told us yet whether the hen or the egg was first!

It is said that certain flowers do not thrive with certain others. Place one in a glass of water, and place another of different nature with it, and the first will droop and fade. The same may be said in regard to people. There may be inexplicable sympathy or antipathy.

I have a belief that all honest thinkers and workers, filled with a spirit of universal charity, are facing the rising sun.

Some live as between two walls, and only



see along the line they make for themselves, whether politics, commerce, theology, &c. . . . and become pessimists through want of touch with the unlimited outside and its ever-widening possibilities.

To be aware that we are thinking, and yet not to understand how we think, is a curious puzzle.

I have been pondering the words of Gerhart Hauptman: "Wenn erst das Grosse ins Leben tritt, dann ist alles Kleine wie weggefeht. Das Kleine trennt, das Grosse, das eint. Der Tod is immer das Grosse, der Tod und die Liebe. Gott is mir alles. Der Pastor nichts."

How the mind divides people! Go into an omnibus or a train or an hotel, and your intuition tells you that only here or there, by a happy chance, is there any one with whom you could expect to hold any conversation.

The leaf grows and matures and falls:

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man does the same. And whether the process be upward or downward, all is in the universal consciousness, all is life.

When as a child I was told in my prayers to ask all things for Christ's sake, I replied, No, I would ask for my own sake! The reply was a healthy one.

O thou beneficent angel Sleep! I hear mysterious Night call thee out of the busy day. Thou flyest on noiseless wings, and in thy presence all is peace.

Often I have sighed for the bliss of being understood.

I have never felt anxious about my soul: it is my frail body that troubles me. Yet, in reading "The Eternal Conflict" by Wm. Romaine Paterson, I may say that from the innermost depths of my being I exclaim, "Is it possible to exaggerate the strange lot of the soul, this isolated thing in the midst of the unconscious universe which streams

and beats upon it, this too sensitive plant in a desert of dark winds ? ”

The cock crows, and the midnight silence seems greater.

What unspeakable mystery and grandeur are suggested by words such as *Soul, Eternity, Nevermore, Hope, Life*

It is curious to think of the dual nature of life ; the unseen life of thought, and the seen life of action. It is related of Sir Walter Scott that being so extremely hospitable and sociable one of his visitors was impelled to ask, When do you think ? “ Oh,” said he, “ I lie *simmering* over things for an hour before I get up. Besides, in the plantations while Tom marks out a dike or a drain, one’s fancy may be running its ain riggs in some other world.”

A noble womanhood is the strongest, loveliest power on earth. Would that all men aspired towards it with profoundest

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reverence as for something far above, never looking below as for that which was beneath them !

What we usually understand by aristocracy is the class who have power over material things. Popularly speaking, the term pre-supposes wealth. The *real* aristocracy is something O so far different !

Let us beware of legislating for futurity, lest the law that we regard as a boon in our day may prove a curse in an age different from ours.

How is it that in what pertains to what we call "religion" all that is joyful or mirthful has been excluded ? The sunshine is surely as holy as the cloud.

Imagination, that fire of the gods ! Though kindled on earth, it mounts heavenward and gives light to the stars.

I have awakened out of the Universal

Consciousness, and I conclude that I shall awake again and again forever.

Sarcasm, judiciously used, is a splendid weapon. A witty story is a revelation. A hearty laugh is an elixir of life. The tear of joy is as holy as the tear of sorrow. The courageous mood is more inspiring than the despairing one. Hope is the mainspring of action.

My first printed poem was to the effect that Thought and Sorrow are akin:<sup>1</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> O sweet sad face,  
                   Where dwells thy charm?  
 Lurks it in thy waving hair  
 Or in thy form of grace so rare;  
 Come, whisper to me, whisper where?

In many a scene of brilliant throng  
 I've watched the mazy dance and gay,  
 Full many a statelier form I've seen  
                   In costlier array;

But scarcely have I found that look  
 (Too sweet for Nature oft to trace),  
 As if of thought and sorrow fraught,  
 And both so deep and so combined,  
 One dare not say of which the mind.

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as life goes on I say so ever more emphatically. In music I find the same impression expressed. Beethoven's Funeral March, Chopin's Funeral March—all that my soul draws to itself seems to be made up of Thought and Sorrow.

The physical eye sees but a short distance ; but to the mental eye what vistas open ! To the intellect, life is an ever-changing panorama.

We project ourselves into all that we do or say. If I write a letter, my personality is in it even to the swing of the pen.

Artistic nations are said to be cruel. Where is the connection between art and cruelty ? Gardeners, 'tis said, are cruel. That may be because they must kill in order to cultivate. The weed has to be rooted out in order to give room to the flower.

A serene mental atmosphere is absolutely necessary for the best work of the scholar.

The ploughman waits for the thunderstorm to pass over ; the student should wait till his nerves be quiet.

Cultivate the mind. It contains the only furnishing that we can carry about with us.

*London.*—Noise is so distressing and distracting, I wish the machinery of the world were well oiled. What with stony streets, and vehicles, and organ-grinders—it is a rare thing to rest in peace. And when will men understand that quiet, dignified speech is more forcible than shouting and ranting !

I sympathise with Schopenhauer in his suffering from noise, and, like him, would “clap into the jail any man that cracked his whip on the street.”

I seem to have been born tired. Yet I obey all the laws of health so far as I see them. Why then should I be tired ? Is it because some great great ancestor did not obey the laws of health ? What use can there



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be in my suffering for his ignorance or delinquency ?

The dreamers are scoffed at. Yet they have the ideas, and the ideas gave birth to the steam-engine and to wireless telegraphy, and all that the future contains !

Ah, the divinity of a true soul full of aspirations, and without prejudices ! I love the frank glance of the fearless honest thinker.

When society wishes to honour a man, it invites him to dinner, and stuffs him with food and drink ! This is our boasted civilisation !

I foresee a good time coming for the world of humanity. How I wish I could make part of it and share in the better things my mind's eye sees. But my day will be done !

How few there be in whom one can

place absolute confidence! The first may be candid and kind, but dangerously impulsive; a second may be logical and upright, but insufferably selfish; a third may be sympathetic and pious, but timid even to cowardice. And so on. . . . Generally speaking, the passions and the superstitions still rule the world. The golden age—the age of Reason—is still but the dream of the poet.

The true critic has a noble vocation, if also a solemn responsibility. Of course I do not speak of the critic according to the popular acceptation, which appears to mean only one who finds fault. I speak of the critic as judge. The criticism or judgment may be for or against, or partly one, partly the other. To call names is undignified and a waste of breath. The world grows in apprehension and can distinguish the fool though he be clad in lace, or the king though he wear not a crown!

I look over my music. Most of the

songs are trash, and, though they have cost many a shilling, they hardly bear trying over more than once. The sole gem among them made no pretence to be anything, and I bought it for twopence! It is by Metastasio (the words), the music by Deffell. I have never heard any one sing it. I have never met any one who knew it. It has but two verses—beautiful as Heine. It is like a pearl that has just left the ocean and still retains a fragrance of the briny wave. And, happily, it has found its mate; for it is wedded to a rare, unique melody that one could not imagine united to any other words.

Condemn not the visionary or dreamer. Ask yourself what the world would be without him. Suppose that one had always to talk to the purely practical man, the man of calculation, of severe facts and settled ideas; the man who always walks the straight highway without shadow of turning. What a Sahara! Rather I would lay me down by the sea-shore and listen to the voice within

the shell, and await the return of the divinest endowment the gods have known to create—the sublime power we call *imagination*.

A hearty laugh! Is there anything like it for bringing thought to the surface, and good nature to the judgment? It is spontaneous—"the spark of Nature that makes the whole world kin." It avoids argument, or is a climax to discussion. It is a bright sunbeam that frightens away shadows. Banish it not. It has nothing to do with the forced smile or the frivolous giggle. It is wholesome, genuine. It brings tears of joy to the eyes and imparts a healthy tone to the entire being.

I delight in a nice little book, and a nice-looking little book. Not bright red, like war; nor flaring white, like a common farm-house; but rather the sober deep blue of a calm sky, that is suggestive of meditation and aspiration and of an eternity to think in—a dreamland of the poets, without barriers, without noise, without routine

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—nothing but the low musical voice of the spheres, and the whisper of the still small voice of the soul that is ever calling “Higher!”

I have learnt to lean on my own soul.

If we are created of the gods, and they know what sufferings we inherit, surely they must oftentimes weep for their creation.

Why is cruelty?

I see the gulls flying over the water, and I grumble always that Nature gave me no wings.

*Life* is but another name for *struggle*.  
I have always seen that.

I feel that my body is mortal; sometimes I think I feel that my spirit is immortal!

For what object am I? I know nothing so strange as that I should exist without knowing for what object.

If I could live without pain, and without becoming a burden to others, I should like to live from sheer curiosity to see what this Earth arrives at.

What a solitude I live in! This solitude may grow to fit me like a garment.

The sky looks all heavy and dark this morning, all but one speck of blue sky just appearing. It suggests the golden Crocus of Spring springing out of a carpet of dead leaves.

Alone, alone! How the waves beat on the shore to-night! What is my life? What is it to myself? What is it in Time—in Eternity?

*February 21.*—I am not afraid of those who understand me.

What a beautiful world this is or might be . . . but, what a short time we have here!

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If there be a journey after death the saddest thing to me is that one should journey *alone*; yet in life one is *alone*. And I am quite sure that death ends *all*—the all that we know now, not the *all* of Eternity.

I feel as if I had wings which somehow I can't lift—a physical fuel is wanting.

It appears as if everything was alive, and was only dependent on certain conditions to show the life that is in it. As conditions are ever changing, so shall we have different manifestations of life, and thus on and on, so that "It doth not yet appear what we shall be."

*March 5.*—Learn one thing if nothing else: learn to take care of yourself so as to live an independent, rational life, and not be a burden to others.

*March 8.*—The moon and the stars shine on the lake to-night. How sublime the study of astronomy! I could give myself



to it, and in it forget that there is such a thing as Death.

*Paris, March 16.*—What we are depends largely on what is outside of us as well as on what is in us. We are communicated with, as much as we communicate. Certain appearances stir within us certain trains of thought: different persons call from us different expressions, different emotions. We have a part in all, and all have a part in us.

I find comfort in the thought that I form a portion of my time, and am carried on the arms of my time along with all that is making part of my life—the trees and grass and birds and humanity, so that living or dying I have my setting in the order of things material and spiritual. Nothing can take me out of my place, which is assured with the absolute certainty that 2 and 2 make 4.

I look up at the midnight sky, with its myriad twinkling stars, and I forget fear!

## 36 ECHOES FROM THE SOLITUDES

Looking out on the wondrous beauty of the earth, it appears as if the far-off end might be trusted. That is as one may speak of an end. For after all it is only little things that have ends or beginnings. There is an unfinished symphony which also never had beginning.

The human being is suggestive of an oyster in its shell. Man's prejudices make for him impassable walls.

A thought given out is as a stone thrown in water. It causes motion.

That which we call "death" would not seem so hideous had it been ordained that one should not meet it alone, but with the pleasant companions of life. To know that even one other was with us, and meeting the "unknown" at the same moment with us, would lighten the dark aspect.

Never do I see a steam-engine go past but I mentally exclaim, What a miracle!

Some one has said that "The only heresy that is known among the angels is when a man stops work to condemn his neighbour who does not think as he does."

Always it has been my idea that the stage will take the place of the church. It has to a great extent already done so. It is recreation and instruction in one.

How little originality there is! Walk through a picture gallery, and then count how many pictures have inspired you.

Why should a dog growl at you, if not that it thinks!

Interesting and quaint are many of the old myths, and none more so than that which relates that the world was made in six days! Poor little world!

Only a very great power could imagine the innumerable ways of giving us pain. There is such a gamut of aches—all the

way from a toothache—"the hell o' a' diseases"—to a soul's pang, and *vice versâ*.

Our annoyances are, mostly, simply misunderstandings. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," must always be the prayer (uttered or unuttered) of the generous charitable spirit.

How much trouble a mother comes through in bringing up a child, and then Death takes the mother, and what has been or what can be her recompense?

Nature has made a muddle of some things. A man loves a woman, but the woman does not love that man. It is not his fault; it is not her fault. Whose fault is it?

Most persons are married: how many of them are mated? Some there be who are so true to their ideals that they are absolutely forced to remain single. Some meet the one elect when one or other has contracted other ties. And so, for one reason

or another, in most lives there is a tear-drop in the heart always.

Is not the first and best relationship, and most enduring, a noble friendship? It is rooted in the soul, and is ever green. Its branches reach fearlessly out into the unbounded garden of thought, and its flowers are tended by the high gods.

Only in exceptional cases may the marriage tie have anything approaching permanency or even stability in its character. Tennyson has well said, "We needs must love the highest when we see it, &c. . . ."

It is best surely to look every question straight in the face, and to see things just as they are. Only thus can we learn to deal with things, and to discriminate between laws that are just, and laws that are purely conventional, and often essentially unjust.

We are sometimes too indisposed to work, and we fret over the time that is lost

in waiting till Nature makes her repairs. One of the greatest trials of life is that of *suffering waiting*. Yet we can find a consolation in the knowledge that Nature is doing for us all the time.

The most beautiful things become ridiculous if not in right hands. Tristan and Isolde must be played by a Tristan and Isolde.

That the church and the law should hold uncongenial married couples together till death, is surely a barbarous custom, unworthy of what we call our civilisation. It is easy to picture a loneliness of two ten times worse than a loneliness of one.

I can imagine nothing farther removed from the modest, refined, intellectual woman, than the gaudy lady of the street. I can imagine nothing farther removed from the upright, self-respecting, manly man, than the self-indulging, worldly gentleman of a depraved society.

It is noticeable that the dictatorial decided persons are those most given to change their minds suddenly.

That which we are thinking about most we are least apt to talk about.

Life resembles a great machine. It is composed of many parts, each part having a different purpose, yet all the parts contributing to one end, making one whole.

Trees may live centuries. Not so man. This looks strange. One would expect the more highly endowed life to have been given capacity for longest life.

Could we eliminate pain we need no better world than this.

In the realm of mind we know not what is preparing. So surely as Nature objectifies what is in her, so surely it becomes what we call dead, and falls like a withered leaf.



Humanity may be pardoned a defiant mood. There is so much unavoidable suffering, so much pure tragedy, that is it any wonder the spirit recoils at times? In fact there is an attitude of defiance that suggests the best health.

Each of us being to a large extent of necessity what he is, we cannot reasonably be long angry with each other.

The kaleidoscope suggests strange ideas. Our human lives depend much on the relations in which we find ourselves to each other. The change of relations is a change of pattern. In this sense, "There is a power that shapes our ends, &c. . . ."

The companionship of a blazing log is sweet, or a beautiful flower, or the ripple of a brook.

Ah music! Sweet song! Thou breath of the angels! The dream of the moon and the stars! Unfettered art thou. Forever

dost thou soar. Thou livest in the heart and speakest to the heart—to each heart in its own hidden tone. Thou severest none, but unitest many. Thou hast caught the tears of the clouds, but also the joyful notes of the lark that to heaven springeth. 'Tis thine to call to glory; and thine to waft to the celestial heights of peace!

In my life already tragedies! Knowing so much, and knowing so little: *that* is awful!

I could specify some things I do not like in Nature. I have longed to get outside her tyranny. Look at the helpless little mouse tortured by the cat. Explain me that!

As lightning flashes from the clouds and disappears, so music is evoked from dull notes and passes into silence.

Goethe asked, "Do we suffer most from the ills we fear, or from those that actually happen?"

## 44 ECHOES FROM THE SOLITUDES

Nature works just the same on Sunday as on Monday. Curious are the restrictions that man imposes on himself.

What a power resides in minute things invisible to the naked eye. A man succumbs to a microbe!

"And Balaam's ass spoke!" I don't believe it. That a parrot should speak is miracle enough!

Life resembles a panoramic show. The scenes come in at one side and disappear at the other.

Let us project our thought far along the lonely path, and speak as we think.

I enjoy nothing so much as intellectual work.

The solitude of country life in proximity to a large city, I find most congenial.

Whenever, as now, I see the crescent

moon shine out upon the calm sky of evening, I feel as though my mother looked at me with blessing: then the Past comes clear before my soul, and all the sweetness of the years ere I had looked on death.

ARC D'ÉTOILE, PARIS, *April 7, 1901.*

If the gods had given me my choice of wings or feet, I would have chosen wings. From the time when I could think I have lamented the want of wings and wondered at their omission in the making of man. But let me not forget the wings of the Soul:—

I watch the birds that hop about my feet  
Across the lengthening shadows on the lawn,  
And see them perch upon the slender twigs  
And lightly sway themselves from tree to tree,  
Then soar into the peaceful blue of heaven,  
And send to earth a perfect flood of song.

Oft will man envy these glad birds their wings,  
Forgetting his soul's pinions, that can take  
Him on from flower to flower and peak to peak,  
And upward to that vast ethereal dome  
Beyond where bird can reach or wind may blow,  
And back and forth through all the centuries —  
(From ages past to ages yet to be),

## 46 ECHOES FROM THE SOLITUDES

Until, as free as lark in yon blue sky,  
He soars in the pure azure of his thought,  
And utters songs that lift the human world.

—*Woodnotes in the Gloaming.*

The world shakes off its superstitions slowly and with pain. Even when the Reason calls itself free, it has still to do battle with that extraordinary power *Custom*, that continues to hallow many a form from which the spirit has long since flown. *Custom* makes a slow march of

“The new creed of science, which showeth to man  
How he darkly began,  
How he grew from a cell to a soul, without plan,  
How he breaks like a wave of the ocean, and  
goes  
To eternal repose,  
A tone that must fade, tho’ the great Music  
grows !”

*Rome, 1894.*—One day in passing by the window of a bookshop in Rome, my attention was arrested by a few remarkable lines which have often since recurred to me. Looking through the window I copied the

words with a pencil on the back of an old envelope. They are as follows :—

FEDE E RAGIONE.

“Non credere nulle senza prima esaminare, ma credi ogni cosa se la ragione e l'evidenza ti assicurano di credere ; e fa di non conoscere mai il pregiudizio. In qualunque incontro riceva la verita, e sposala a dispetto di tutto il mondo.”—FILIPPO ABIGUENTE, *Dagl' insegnamenti dei Druidi*.

I close these pages of “Echoes from the Solitudes” with the words of Scotia's immortal bard :—

“O that I had the power,  
I know that I have the wish,  
To wipe all tears from all eyes.”





## Part II



UN BOUQUET . . . PETITES FLEURS  
. . . PRENEZ !

“QUAND je vous livre mon poème,  
Mon cœur ne le reconnaît plus ;  
Le meilleur demeure en moi-même ;  
Mes vrais vers ne seront pas lus.”

—SULLY-PRUDHOMME.

HATH my heart caught its tear from the  
    wave,

    Its sigh from the wail of the wind,  
And its joy from the morning star?

WHATE'ER betide, shed not an idle tear,  
Man is a plant upon this earthly sphere,  
To grow and bloom and fade and disappear.

O let him prize his transitory hour,  
As summer roses deck the summer bower  
And die content that others come to flower.

Allotted is his place and time by fate.  
Whatever was, is now, or cometh late,  
Is Nature's secret—kept inviolate.

## SONG OF THE FOREST BIRD

FROM yonder grove of olive trees,  
Borne lightly on the midnight breeze,  
    Resounds the wild bird's song :  
A carol of pure joy it seems,  
Recalling moonlit rippling streams,  
    And forests dwelt among.

“ No longer sit I morbid here,”  
Cried I, “ whilst thou, bird, warblest clear  
    The message sent through thee :  
Dost think thy song is all thine own ?  
In truth it is high heaven's alone !  
    But instruments are we.

For ‘ inspiration ’ is a name—  
And ‘ instinct ’ also—for the flame,  
    The fire that kindleth all,  
By which the worlds on worlds go round,  
And light and life and joy abound,  
    And nations rise and fall.

ECHOES FROM THE SOLITUDES 55

The tunes that sound through Nature's lute  
Are played by breath of heaven, or mute

Would be the various strings :

Our songs are but a heritage,  
Attuned in a long bygone age,

And from us, too, take wings !

Unconsciously we let them go,  
Expressions of our mirth or woe,

Upon the tide of fate :

Of after-time, perchance, the flowers—

Those ideal thoughts—that we call 'ours,'

Which light our present state ! ”

—*Träumereien.*



## HUMANITY

WANDERERS all, as the clouds on the sky,  
Restlessly moving like waves of the sea,  
Pondering even as sibyls of old,  
Reading in time of eternity !  
Flower of its age the mysterious soul,  
Fruit of the past is it seen of to-day.  
Fallen the kernel, what shall outgrow ?  
Prophecy saith not what hides in the dawn.  
Broodeth the night o'er a *sense* yet unborn ?

NOVEMBER

THE night advances : stars begin to peep,  
And suddenly within the vaulted deep  
The Northern lights appear in endless play.  
No Autumn there, nor sign of death I find,  
But inspiration for the lofty mind.  
If earth be darkness, somewhere there is  
day !

By the creek at home.

PROMISE

THERE is a deeper meaning unto life.  
     How shall we find the key?  
 Is there a latent sense within the soul—  
     Herald of prophecy?

What æons shall the mystic soul require  
     Its purpose to fulfil?  
 How many seeming deaths in its career  
     Must be accomplished still?

Romance nor history an answer give;  
     But oft in music's tone  
 The aspirations of the soul are heard  
     Calling to the Unknown.

And in the artist's colours we can trace  
     The glow of other skies,  
 Illuminating all his inner world  
     With richer harmonies.

While not a poet's song but is a sigh.

Th' ideal that he sings

He never can embrace : aloft and on

Eternally it wings !

## TO CHATTERTON

[On seeing the engraving from the painting by Henry Wallis, R.W.S., in the National Gallery of British Artists. The boy-poet took a dose of arsenic and died before he was 18.]

ACROSS the gulf of Time,  
O child of genius rare,  
My spirit calleth thine !  
Thy song brief but sublime,  
A wail of proud despair,  
Responsive speaks to mine.

Unheeded of the world,  
Like to a trembling lark  
On Autumn's withered tree,  
Whose frozen leaves are hurled  
From branches cold and dark  
Away, relentlessly,

Thy heart nigh broken turned,  
    Hopeless, from earth's hard bed,  
    And quitting mournfully  
The page by which yet burned  
    Night's lamp, thy spirit fled  
    From us too silently.

BELLEVUE, SEINE,  
*June 23, 1900.*

THE SEA GULLS

ALL day I've listened to the sobbing rain,  
And to the wailing of the wind-tossed sea,  
The restless gulls before my window-pane  
Are flying to and fro continually.

Unbridled fancy wandereth here and there,  
Seeking somewhat to give the spirit peace ;  
Fair hopes arise and fall like birds in air :  
Must it be thus until life's struggle cease?

TORQUAY, DEVONSHIRE,  
*March 28, 1896.*



AT MY WINDOW

THE fire burns low. 'Tis night. I sit alone.  
Wide ocean stretches out before.  
How its dark waves roll in with sullen moan,  
Lapping the rocky, rugged shore !

Shine out, fair moon, and stars of heaven,  
shine !

My heart is on the treacherous deep.  
Be kind, both wind and wave ! To-night  
combine  
To lull my anxious soul to sleep !

TORQUAY, 1896.

IN ABSENCE

(FOR MUSIC)

FAR, far away  
From all the heart holds dear ;  
Far, far away  
From all that youth desired ;  
Yet fairer is the world than once it seemed,  
And fairer grows, methinks, than all I  
dreamed :

Then hope, my heart !

If darkness falls  
Upon my narrow path,  
If darkness falls  
To cloud the present hour,  
Yet suddenly a new light is descried,  
And all my world within is glorified !

Then hope, my heart !

ECHOES FROM THE SOLITUDES 65

What do we know  
That we can dare affirm?

What do we know  
Created to endure?

The sky is not more changeable than we,  
And not more fluctuating is the sea.

Then hope, my heart!

1900.

THE HERMIT OF THE ENGADINE

HE roves 'mong the mountains,  
 The trees are his friends,  
 The earth is his carpet,  
 Sky over him bends.

The brooks are his music,  
 His solace the flowers,  
 In whose faces he gazes—  
 Their beauty o'erpowers

His soul, that he wonders  
 Such exquisite things  
 Can spring up of themselves.  
 "What beauty," he sings,

"From her darkest recesses,  
 Where mysteries lie,  
 Earth unfolds in lone valleys  
 To none but the sky!"

In a silence he lives  
That no city sound mars,  
Alone with the forests,  
No light but the stars !

THE ENGADINE,  
*August 1900.*

TO NATURE

NATURE, I would be thy child,  
 Sit and worship at thy feet,  
 Read the truth upon thy face,  
 Wait upon thine accent sweet ;  
 I would put my hand in thine,  
 Bow my head upon thy knee,  
 Live upon thy love alone,  
 Fearless, trusting all to thee.

CHARITY

THOU askest not to know the creed,  
The rank or name is naught to thee,  
Where'er the human heart cries "Help!"  
Thy kingdom is, O charity!



MIDNIGHT

A RONDEL

DARKNESS fills the midnight air,  
Sighs the melancholy sea,  
Aimless wander o'er the lea  
Homeless zephyrs in despair !

Lone my spirit—full of care,  
Yearning, asking to be free !  
Darkness fills the midnight air,  
Sighs the melancholy sea !

Solitude can I not dare ?  
Let my spirit shame not me !  
Cast aside despondency !  
Godlike struggle ! Godlike bear !  
Darkness fills the midnight air !

## THE FOREST

How solemn is the forest, dark and cool,  
 Scarcely the trees have left the sunlight  
     room,  
 And in the alley dim, 'twixt towering pines,  
 I walk as down a vast cathedral aisle  
 Awe-stricken, pausing oftentimes to list  
 The silence, broken only by the whispering  
     leaves  
 That sigh betimes, touched by the Summer  
     wind.

A temple is the forest—a retreat  
 Which one may seek in loneliness of heart  
 And therein find repose, companionship,  
 As if a nearness to the unseen Power  
 Made itself felt, and man became a part  
 Of Mother Nature, breathing with her  
     breath,

72 ECHOES FROM THE SOLITUDES

Communing with her e'en as with a friend,  
And from her secret altars looking up  
To where the tree-tops wave in the free air,  
And higher still to the calm firmament  
Of the night sky with all its myriad stars,  
Like angel-messengers of love and peace.

WÖRISHOFEN, BAYERN,  
*24th September 1900.*

## THE QUESTION OF QUESTIONS

IN the glow of the firelight sitting,  
Alone with the dying year,  
While watching the red flames playing  
About the gnarled logs and sere,

The ghost-like silence inviting  
My fancy to tread those dim aisles  
That stretch far away into mist-land—  
The Past's uncountable miles!

My earliest thought I remember  
(The same that I ponder this hour),  
"O whence our mysterious *being*,  
And what the mysterious Power?"

And whithersoever I've wandered,  
'Mid blossoming fields of delight,  
Or through deep abysses of sorrow,  
This question was ever in sight.

74 ECHOES FROM THE SOLITUDES

I read it in starlight and moonlight,  
It speaks in the ocean's dull roar,  
And haunteth the silence, the darkness :  
O deathless is it, I implore ?

MÜNCHEN, 1900-1901.

ON SEEING A PANSY IN THE  
GARDEN

UP from the darkness behold  
    Springeth the loveliest face,  
Tinted of tenderest hues,  
    Dowered with ineffable grace.

Darkness and silence! O powers  
    Unrecognised till the bloom,  
Nurtured in your loving arms,  
    Rises above the cold tomb!

O GOWAN !

O GOWAN by the brook side  
That wakes to greet the Spring  
And smiling sky of azure,  
What message dost thou bring ?  
  
Hast heard the storm-wind raging ?  
Or felt the frost or rain ?  
I thought thee dead, frail Gowan,  
Yet here thou art again !



## REST

As we mount higher up the scale of life,  
The less of rest doth there appear to be ;  
For though great Nature seem awhile to  
    pause,  
And silence fill the cavern of the night,  
And though the clouds lie mute like sleeping  
    gods,  
Life conscious is, and there's no rest at all.  
No rest at all—or only perfect rest :  
That grand repose where rest and work are  
    one !  
The rest that is when o'er earth's canopy  
The northern lights keep at their ceaseless  
    play ;  
The rest that is when hid from human eye  
The acorn prophesies the coming Spring ;  
The rest that is when wearied hands lie still  
While thought communeth with the One  
    Supreme !

78 ECHOES FROM THE SOLITUDES

All, all is still. The day is hid in night ;  
But soon the night will hide within the day ;  
And noiseless glides the chariot of the  
morn !

All, all is still. This hour be consecrate.  
My spirit, onward ! Self-controlled, self-  
poised,  
Till this unceasing, everlasting change  
Become to thee—as to the Eternal—*rest !*

## HORIZONS

UPON this mountain-land I pause to view  
The noble landscape glittering in the sun—  
The crowded city with its suburb wide,  
The villages, and then the rural homes.  
Majestic, farther on, the river flows,  
While many a wooded island dots its breast.

In contemplation of the far away  
A solemn peacefulness comes o'er the mind,  
Remembering though th' horizon bounds the  
view,  
It limits not the wondrous universe.

Close now my eyes upon the outer world.  
Look forth, my spirit; with an earnest gaze  
Survey the long, dim vista of the years.  
Does there appear to thee a sunset line—  
A point where heaven and earth would seem  
to meet?  
Mount but another step and thou shalt find

80 ECHOES FROM THE SOLITUDES

That Time itself shall lengthen as you rise.  
The soul's horizon, is it not the tomb?  
That line which marks the spirit's heaven-  
ward flight,  
The grave, which seems to say, "Behold, the  
close!"

Successive deaths await the onward soul—  
"Horizons" call them—for as it ascends  
The sky uplifts her gates, mists disappear.  
In such infinitude the spirit rests!

THE MOUNTAIN, MONTREAL.

THE CARRIER PIGEON

[On seeing the thousands of carrier pigeons sent from  
the Trocadéro, Paris, 1895.]

STAY, gentle bird, I hide beneath thy wing  
A message. Bear it safely yont the sea,  
Not pausing in thy flight until thou bring  
From one afar a token back to me.

'Neath thy soft pinion would that I might  
hide,  
Braving the tempest and the darksome  
night ;  
Ah, cruel fate, that I must here abide,  
While thou, frail bird, hast power to take  
thy flight.

## TO SPRING

Now hail to the maiden in green !  
The child with the beauty of hope,  
Who walks in the pride of her youth,  
And dreams of her life's boundless scope.

She singeth bird-voiced the new joys,  
And whispereth love to the flowers,  
While wooing the wind of the South,  
To return to the earth's lonely bowers.

On her brow is the garland of gods,  
And miracles work her fair hands,  
O'er last Autumn's carpet of leaves  
The delicate crocus expands.

High heaven grows radiant and blue,  
The valleys a jubilee ring,  
From Winter's cold chrysalis, death,  
Emerges man's hope—the child Spring.

*April 7, 1900.*

NIGHT

O NIGHT of death! How soon in thee  
to rest!

Thy soothing darkness and thy silence  
deep

Lulling our spirits to a dreamless sleep!

O Night! How scant our knowledge of  
ourselves!

We wonder if this life be the first page  
(How shall a child th' innumerable gage!)!

O Night! *Inseparable thou from day.*

This thought is mankind's consolation,  
hope,

Suggesting unto him unbounded scope.

O Night! In utter ignorance we paint

The unturned page—the future's larger  
day—

With our poor colours fading all away.

84 ECHOES FROM THE SOLITUDES

O Night ! Thy sky is not without its stars.  
Our superstitions fall to nullity,  
While Reason heavenward climbs eternally !

MÜNICH, *January 1, 1901.*



DAWN

[On the death of a near relative.]

As when at early dawn before a sound  
Hath broken the tranquillity of night,  
Ere e'en the distant hills come into sight  
Or pearly dew hath risen from the ground,

Just as the rays of gentle morn appear,  
Kissing the meadows, wakening a smile  
Upon the opening daisies—earth awhile  
Continuing in slumber calm, so here

Upon this face where Death hath laid his  
hand

A peacefulness is seen ; as though a gleam  
Had touched his soul from yonder spirit-  
land,

And held it still enraptured of its dream ;  
As if from darkness into radiant day  
He must have passed in blissfulness away.

ZURICH, *January* 1894.

### THE AFTERGLOW

It is the afterglow. The dying sun  
Went down behind yon distant purple hill  
Where sleep the quiet dead, while breezes  
still

A solemn requiem chant ere day be done.  
Full o'er the city yet, in beauty rare,  
Shine rosy beams that touch the countless  
spires,

And play upon the rushing river there,  
Illumine the leaden sky with crimson fires  
More splendid far than when at noontide  
hour

The sun was in the zenith of his power.

O dead and gone—is this the afterglow !  
From hidden moss-grown graves behind yon  
hill

A soft effulgence seemeth yet to flow—  
A subtle tie that binds us closer still,

ECHOES FROM THE SOLITUDES 87

And kindles in our spirits' clouded skies  
A fire of hope that never, never dies :  
Bright picture unto which souls trouble-  
tossed  
Have turned, in holy contemplation lost,  
Forgetting earth's wild turmoil, hate, and  
strife,  
To dream a dream of love's unending life.

MONTREAL, CANADA.

## IDEALS

NOT for the deed that's done is this our  
praise ;  
Not to the word that's written bow we  
down ;  
'Tis something greater far that we would  
crown :  
The highest work a higher thought can  
raise.

When life is painted in some noble phase,  
And skilful art has merited renown,  
The artist to himself will sadly own  
How feebly he his soul's clear thought  
conveys.

The picture's but a symbol from his hand,  
And symbolises to *his* mind alone  
The fulness of his fancy's brightest gleam :  
Admiring crowds will gaze—an endless band,  
And deem they follow out each thought  
and tone ;  
But hardly one will catch the artist's  
dream.

AH, ROSE SO SWEET !

Ah, Rose so sweet ! the sweetest of all  
flowers ;

No sister hast thou to compare with thee ;  
Rich, poor, and wise and simple, watch to  
see

Thy early bloom, thou queen of summer  
bowers !

“ Hush ! ” spake a pleading voice, “ no blos-  
som towers

Supreme o'er all her sisters of the lea ;

Associate are flowers by you and me

With Time and Place,—from these derive  
their powers.

“ The yellow Broom that decks my native  
shore

And fragrant Heather on the mountain's  
brow,

Forever must my truest favourites stand ;

To me they're linked with all poetic lore,

And memory dwells with pride upon them  
now,—

Loved emblems of a wild, romantic land ! ”

## THOUGHT

SERENE is yon deep blue expanse above—  
 Bright symbol of the tranquil human  
 mind—  
 The hurricane well passed; now calm,  
 resigned,  
 And shining with the universal love.  
 Low down upon that placid brow of heaven,  
 A floating cloud, as if it sought a star,  
 By music-loving summer winds up-driven,  
 Appears—a white-winged thought blown  
 from afar.  
 Transcendent thought! with thee in gloomy  
 fears,  
 We mourning sink into the vale of tears,  
 Forsaking not the sorrow of thy night;  
 Or joyful follow in thy glorious lead,  
 To wander with thee through the starry  
 mead,  
 Companions of thy glory, of thy light.

## THE IDEAL

“WHAT now is thine ideal?” asks a friend,  
As with an earnest glance he turns to me;  
“Each one hath his own vision; let us see  
Wherein these differ, and whereto they  
tend.

Think of the world that is; of what “might  
be”;

Of what was loveliest to you long ago—  
The shattered ideals—place them in a  
row—

Beginning with the years of infancy.”—  
I strove then to call up the vanished past—  
A swift-drawn mental picture of the  
whole—

Tracing each aim unto the present hour;  
But words were halting, and I could at last  
But say: “O sky-ward looking, fleet-  
winged soul!

Earth hath no name for thine ideal  
flower.”

LONG AGO

At evening as the shadows softly fall,  
And stars upon the sky begin to peep,  
When hands lie folded and the weary sleep,  
While silence reigns supreme above us all,

Comes "Long Ago," with ghostly tread to  
me,  
And, smiling, takes me gently by the hand,  
Leading me back through that mysterious  
land  
Which only with the mental eyes we see.

Within the precincts of the Past's dim halls,  
Secured from every earthly jar or fret,  
A peace ineffable upon me falls ;  
Enrapt in holy calm I can forget  
That the procession of the cruel years  
Leaves us with aching hearts and full of  
tears !



THE ANGEL OF DEATH

[Suggested by Watts' picture.]

TIRED spirit, come ! Lo ! the celestial light  
    Encompasseth thee, and above thy head  
    A halo is. On earth they call thee dead.  
Alone thou art not for thy heavenly flight :  
I, angel from on high, am sent for thee ;  
    Encircled now by my protecting arms,  
    I bear thee far beyond all earth's alarms—  
Thou weary soul, confide thyself to me !  
Now and forevermore doth sorrow cease,  
    And jealousy and envy, toil and strife,  
    For the supernal Goodness reigns above.  
My touch shall give thee everlasting peace ;  
    And from my breath thou hast immortal  
        life ;  
My kiss . . . ah, shrink not . . . is  
    eternal Love.

## HYMN

[I conclude Part II. of "Echoes from the Solitudes" by quoting my father's hymn, which was inserted in a Glasgow hymn-book called "Hymns and Anthems."]

MYSTERIOUS soul ! thou wondrous power,  
Not compassed by the passing hour,  
But boundless, unconfined and free ;  
This earth is not a home for thee.

No orb's thy home ; thou soar'st away  
Beyond light's farthest piercing ray ;  
On through the boundless realms of space,  
Immensity's thy dwelling-place !

Mysterious soul ! thy course sublime  
Not fettered is by years of time ;  
Nor past nor future limits thee—  
Thou livest in eternity !

Thou need'st no passport for the tomb,  
No light to guide thee through its gloom ;  
For thou art life and light combined—  
A ray of the Eternal Mind !

FINIS









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